

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of sending an electronic mail message to members of a mass audience each connected to a network, said method comprising the steps of:

creating a plurality of test messages each having a message content identical in each test message and a plurality of characteristics that may vary, each test message varying from all other test messages in at least one of said characteristics;

storing said message content and retrieving said message content from storage for inclusion in each test message;

sending each test message on said network to different members of said mass audience with all of the test messages together being sent to a minority of the members of said audience;

evaluating feedback as to the effectiveness of each test message;

creating a final message based on the evaluation of the feedback; and

sending said final message on the network to all members of said audience that were not sent one of the test messages.

2. A method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said characteristics include a subject of the message and a time of delivery of the message.

3. A method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said characteristics include an address from which the message originates and an address to which a reply may be sent.

4. A method as set forth in claim 3, wherein said characteristics include a subject of the message and a time of delivery of the message.

5. A method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said characteristics include a day of delivery of the message.

6. A method as set forth in claim 1, wherein each test message is sent to a selected percentage of said mass audience with the members included in each such selected percentage being randomly determined.

7. A method as set forth in claim 1, including the step of evaluating feedback as to the effectiveness of the final message.

8. A system for sending an electronic mail message to members of a mass audience each having a message receiving device connected to a network, said system comprising:

a messaging device on which a plurality of test messages can be composed each having a common content and a plurality of characteristics that are each separate from said content and may be varied for each test message to allow each test message to differ from other test messages in one or more of said characteristics;

a storage file in which said common content can be stored and from which said common content can be retrieved and inserted into each test message; and

an electronic mail transmission device for sending each test message on the network to a different group of selected members of the audience and for subsequently sending a final message on the network to all members of the

audience not sent one of the test messages, whereby feedback from the test messages can be evaluated as to effectiveness to allow the final message to make use of such feedback for inclusion in the final message of an effective combination of said characteristics.

9. A system as set forth in claim 8, wherein said characteristics include a subject of the message and a time of delivery of the message.

10. A system as set forth in claim 8, wherein said characteristics include an address from which the message originates and an address to which a reply may be sent.

11. A system as set forth in claim 10, wherein said characteristics include a subject of the message and a time of delivery of the message.

12. A system as set forth in claim 11, wherein said characteristics include a day of delivery of the message.

13. A system as set forth in claim 8, including means for specifying a selected percentage of the members of said audience to receive each test message.

14. A system as set forth in claim 8, including means for evaluating feedback as to the effectiveness of said final message.

15. A system for sending an electronic mail message to members of a mass audience, said system comprising:

means for creating a plurality of test messages each having a content and a plurality of characteristics that are separate from the content, said test messages

each having the same content and varying from one another only in having differences in at least one of said characteristics;

means for storing said same content and retrieving said same content from storage for inclusion in each of said test messages without recreating said same content for each different test message;

means for sending said test messages to selected members of said mass audience with said selected members being randomly determined;

means for obtaining feedback as to the effectiveness of each test message so a final message can be created based on the feedback; and

means for sending the final message to all members of the audience that have not been sent one of the test messages.

16. A system as set forth in claim 15, wherein said characteristics include a subject of the message and a time of delivery of the message.

17. A system as set forth in claim 15, wherein said characteristics include an address from which the message originates and an address to which a reply may be sent.

18. A system as set forth in claim 17, wherein said characteristics include a subject of the message and a time of delivery of the message.

19. A system as set forth in claim 15, including means for specifying a selected percentage of the members of said audience to receive each test message.

20. A system as set forth in claim 15, including means for evaluating feedback as to the effectiveness of said final message.